

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Committee has included under this section of title II the Department of Commerce agencies involved in technology research and development, scientific assessment and prediction of environmental phenomena, and the administrative and policy functions providing oversight for these activities.

TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION

UNDER SECRETARY FOR TECHNOLOGY/OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 1997	\$9,500,000
Budget estimate, 1998	9,230,000
Committee recommendation	8,800,000

The Committee recommends a fiscal year 1998 funding level for the administration's Office of the Under Secretary/Office of Technology Policy. This amount is \$430,000 less than the fiscal year 1998 budget request and \$700,000 below fiscal year 1997 funding levels. The Committee supports the \$1,675,000 request for the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Technology [EPSCoT] Program, which is modeled on, and complements, the innovative and successful National Science Foundation's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research [EPSCoR]. The purpose of the EPSCoR Program is to stimulate quality research in States traditionally underrepresented in Federal research and development funding. EPSCoT shall serve as a technology counterpart to the EPSCoR. The Committee directs the Department to utilize the existing EPSCoR State network when implementing the EPSCoT Program.

The primary mission of the organizations funded under this account is to coordinate the administration's civilian technology initiative. There is significant coordination between this office and the Office of Science and Technology in the White House on several initiatives which are appropriate for Department of Commerce involvement. Tight budgetary constraints,

**“Taken from Senate Report 105-48
FY 1998 Senate Report...”**

however, prevent the Committee from funding initiatives which may be more appropriately supported by other agencies within the Government. The fiscal year 1998 request of \$350,000 to support economic development for the administration's foreign policy initiatives should be funded through the Department of State or the Agency for International Development, and not the agency charged with directing U.S. civilian technology initiatives. The Committee would be willing to permit the Technology Administration to undertake these activities on a reimbursable basis using funds from other Federal sources outside of the Department of Commerce budget.

The Committee further questions the need to expend funds for the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles [PNGV]. The Committee directs that no funds may be obligated for this purpose until the Secretary provides a report indicating how the Department's funds will be expended in support of this initiative. The report should be provided to the appropriate committees not later than September 30, 1997.

National Technical Information Service [NTIS]..AEmdboAFAEmdnmAF--
The World News Connection [WNC] is an online subscription service provided by NTIS which includes the dissemination of daily newspapers, periodicals, and television and radio transcripts from around the world. The Committee is concerned that NTIS may be providing a service which is subsidized by the Government and competes with services available from the private sector. A paid subscription online service of this scope is beyond the mandate of NTIS which is to facilitate the dissemination of Government information that is scientific, technical, and engineering information [STEI]. The Committee urges the Department to determine whether WNC should continue in its current form.